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Town and Country BUSINESS PROGRAM

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

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CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

A
KEY

to
Business
Understanding



Why Have a Town and Country Business Program?

Youth work constitutes an important part of any county Agricultural Extension Service program, and it is from this nucleus that we find many of our leaders of tomorrow. In today's changing agricultural picture, fresh challenges are apparent in all phases of Agricultural Extension work, and new methods, techniques, and sometimes audiences must be found. The Town and Country Business Program is designed to meet some of these challenges.

Think for a moment about some of the changes which have become so obvious in recent years:

- The majority of farm youth today will earn their living as adults at off-farm jobs.
- Farm production is becoming more oriented toward the requirements of the market place, and there is need for increased understanding of the marketing system.
- Relatively few of the nation's youth have access to classroom training in economics and marketing.

Recognizing these changes and the impact they have upon youth and Agricultural Extension Service programs, let's see how the Town and Country Business Program fits into the changing scene.

Objectives of the Town and Country Business Program

- Provide a greater understanding of business as it operates in the marketing field through firms associated with agriculture.
- Explore and discuss employment opportunities in business that are closely related to agriculture, so capable farm youth will be attracted to agricultural careers.
- Give youth who will go into farming a better appreciation of the problems and structure of agricultural marketing.
- Point to the needs and benefits of training and education for youth who anticipate employment with agricultural business firms.
- Teach some basic economic facts which will help participants to better fit themselves into present-day society.

Beyond the achievement of these objectives are some very important benefits to the Agricultural Extension worker:

- The project will broaden his experience in a new and vital field which is of concern to all in agriculture.
- This project can be a means of stimulating additional educational activity with older youth groups.



Some Important Facts for the Extension Worker to Consider

- The Town and Country Business Program should never be started simply to have another club or to add another activity to the Agricultural Extension worker's already busy schedule. Starting this program requires a lot of time and work, but if properly initiated, it will soon develop to require much less of the worker's time.
- The project should be designed to help youth learn and grow through informal educational experiences.
- The Town and Country Business Program is designed to be conducted by organizational and business leaders with Agricultural Extension personnel serving as resource persons.

Role of the County Extension Worker

As pointed out in the Leader's Guide, the role of the county Agricultural Extension worker becomes that of a resource person:

- Explains youth and Agricultural Extension work to leaders and members.
- Provides meeting materials.
- Visits group on occasion.
- Helps to plan the yearly program.
- Keeps leaders and members informed about overall county and state Agricultural Extension youth program.
- Trains leaders.
- Suggests ideas to build enthusiasm in the group.

Mechanics of Getting Started

Organization

In organizing a Town and Country Business Program it is necessary to do some systematic planning! Who will be the audience? Who will be the leaders? Which business firms shall be included in the program?

The best planning job will be one that involves a sampling of the people we'll want to reach, and the people with whom we'll work to accomplish our goals. The following outline for a community or county planning meeting is suggested:

Outline for a Community and County Planning Meeting

This meeting involves representation from the following groups:

- County Agricultural Extension staff
- County Executive committee
- State Agricultural Extension Youth staff
- Area or State Marketing staff
- Youth (4-H, YMW, etc.)
- Agricultural marketing business firms
- Parents

Agenda for a Planning Meeting

- I. A film or slides depicting the marketing picture with all its challenges and opportunities to present-day agriculture.
- II. The County Agricultural Extension staff relates this visual to the local situation. Emphasis is placed on the need for better insight and training to meet the situation.
- III. The operations of the proposed program are explained. (See page 6, Leader's Guide.)
- IV. The county staff seeks the cooperation of the planning committee in contacting agricultural marketing firms and inviting their participation.

How to Enlist Support

There are two ways to enlist the cooperation of business firms.

Each firm may be contacted individually, or selected executives of prospective firms may be invited



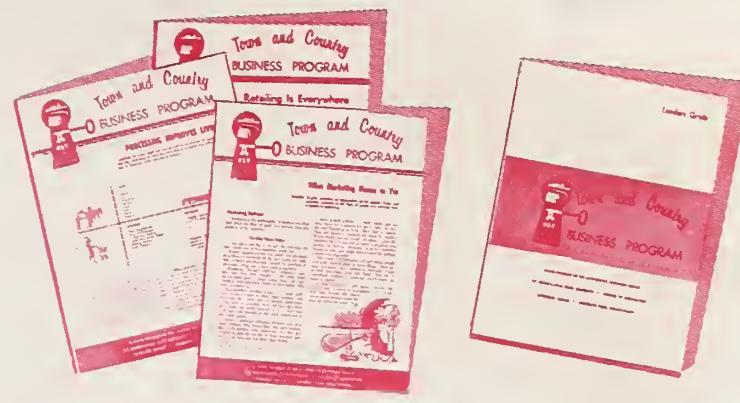
to a group meeting. If the latter method is used, these procedures are suggested:

- I. The meeting is announced by a letter from the planning committee, followed by a personal invitation from the county Agricultural Extension agent. (The planning committee may choose to make this a dinner meeting, perhaps sponsored by some civic group.)
- II. The meeting is opened with a welcome by the chairman of the planning committee, who introduces the county agent.
- III. The county agent outlines the current changes in agriculture (slides, movies, charts, etc.). Emphasis is placed on present needs and opportunities.
- IV. The state club leader, marketing specialist, or county agent outlines the Town and Country Business Program. Copies of materials are distributed and briefly discussed to show the available aids for meetings. Emphasis is placed on the benefits of the program to youth.
- V. Firms are asked to consider this program.
- VI. A suggested schedule for marketing firm participation is developed, as found on page 8 of The Leader's Guide.

Business Program Leaders for The Town and Country

One of the secrets of a successful program is your ability to find and work with the right kind of leadership. The Town and Country Business Program lends itself to two distinct types of voluntary leadership.

Organizational Leaders. Organizational leaders are responsible for the over-all operation and organization of the Town and Country Business Program. As organizational leader you will work with youth, junior leaders, committees, parents, business leaders, and county Agricultural Extension workers in the whole program.



Business Leaders. Business leaders are selected from each of the participating agricultural business firms cooperating in the Town and Country Business Program. A business leader will help in each "Key Point" presentation and is in charge of the "Key Visit" to his firm. These people have special skills and will share their talents by giving special help to members.

Finding Your Leaders

Perhaps you've developed your own technique for finding leaders. If so, that same technique should work in the Town and Country Business Program. If you have been having a problem along this line, here's a three-step tip that may help you:

1. First, know what you're looking for. In the Town and Country Business Program, your organizational leader must be able to work with older youth, business firms; and the county Agricultural Extension staff.
2. The second step is to talk to leading people about this type of person. Ask for their help. Get names of candidates. Spend enough time at this phase, so you have some definite prospects.
3. Invite your favorite prospect to spend some time with you, so you might explain the program and secure his support.

These steps can be applied to find organizational leaders.

In obtaining the business leader, it is recommended that you work with the top executives of the firm. This procedure has several advantages:

- It acquaints the officials of the firm with the program.
- It gives top administration an opportunity to clear any policy matters which would affect the operation of the program.
- It gives administration an opportunity to recommend to you the person in the firm best suited for the job.
- It provides an opportunity for administration to follow through and evaluate the firm's participation in the program.



By proper selection of leaders, a major step toward a successful Town and Country Business Program has been taken.

How to Find Your Firms

Another basic principal for a successful Town and Country Business Program lies in the firms selected as cooperators. To aid in this selection process you'll want to rely on your own personal experience of past acquaintances. Also consult your marketing agents or marketing specialists and profit from their past experiences with these firms. Actually, many county Agricultural Extension workers and marketing agents work together in making these original decisions and contacts. This approach seems to work extremely well, because it brings together the three Agricultural Extension members so they can work closely for a successful program. These persons should include the county Agricultural Extension worker, the state Agri-

cultural Extension youth leader, and the area or state marketing specialist.

Most any firm can adapt its facilities to meet the needs of the Town and Country Business Program, providing it has the desire and enthusiasm to cooperate.

One Final Comment

The Town and Country Business Program is designed to take a minimum share of the Agricultural Extension worker's time after it is in operation. It requires a maximum effort in the initial stages — before you can put it in "automatic drive." The kind of program you have, therefore is, directly dependent upon getting started properly.

You'll find that the Town and Country Business Program gives real strength to your county Agricultural Extension program.

Good Luck!

